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ABSTRACT

University and pre-university education in South Africa is briefly described, along with areas where U.S. universities can assist South African organizations working to promote equal access to quality education. Three basic areas are explored: financial aid for South African students; manpower support to help in tutorials and academic research; and advanced and flexible training opportunities in the United States. Primary and secondary education is segregated and unequal. In addition to the practice of teaching blacks only those skills necessary to serve the white community, black school teachers are grossly underprepared, rooms are overcrowded, and books/supplies are often unavailable. While universities were originally developed to conform to the racial classification in the country, today universities are free to admit students on academic merit alone. Since many blacks cannot enroll at universities because they lack the modest fees required, there is a growing need for student financial aid. In addition, U.S. academics can work with South Africans to provide remedial instruction and assistance in academic research and educational development. Development of flexible programs in the United States conducted over a 3-month to 1-year period could be helpful to South African leaders. Ways for U.S. institutions to get involved are discussed. (SW)

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SUPPORTING CHANGE
Working with South African Universities

by Anne D. Moran and John Volmink

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Education in South Africa is a political issue, one given the highest priority by the vast majority of black South Africans.* This is why we have seen the issue at the forefront in times of strife—earlier in the 1976 Soweto riots and most recently in the national outcry and schools boycott of the past year.

As the U.S. academic community reflects on the problems of South Africa, it is natural to ask how and where our efforts can help to provide for all South Africans quality education free of the racial overtones of apartheid government and separate education.

There are those who say that any support for education in South Africa supports the apartheid government. We contend that there are institutions in South Africa that are openly and actively committed to a non-racial and democratic government. For example, a group of universities led by the University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town recently not only agreed to fully integrate all their own facilities, including residential accommodations, but have called for the rapid abolition of apartheid and the establishment of a new constitution that insures full democratic rights for all South Africans. These institutions obviously are not supporting apartheid; rather, they are demanding change and working to build a truly non-racial system.

While political pressures to bring down apartheid continue, there is a role Americans can play in preparing those who must bring about change and establish and run a just government in a free South Africa. Debate will continue as to what political pressures and strategies are appropriate for individuals and institutions in the United States. We can help to improve both access to and quality of higher education for black South Africans.

However, education *is* a political issue and it is therefore important that U.S. academics and institutions wishing to provide assistance do so in a consultative context with blacks involved in the education process in South Africa.

As a background to discussion of U.S. involvement, we will attempt to provide a brief description of the current educational scene at both university and pre-university levels within South Africa.

Pre-university Education

Education at the primary and secondary level is defined by the government as "own affairs" for each racial group. Therefore, education is segregated and unequal. The legacy of bantu education, which encouraged teaching blacks only those skills necessary to serve the white community, is still present. Teachers in black schools are grossly underprepared, classrooms overcrowded, books and supplies often unavailable. Over 250,000 new students enter the black school system each year, and the government, despite increased allocations to black education in the past several years, continues to spend $7 for the education of a white child for each $1 it spends on a black child.

The result of this system is to leave the country with a functional illiteracy rate of over 40%, a facilities and teacher training backlog of staggering proportions, and a student population that is rejecting what is passed off as schooling.

Despite these statistics, increasing numbers of black students are completing their secondary education and qualifying for university study. By 1995, more black students will qualify for university admission than will whites. This will create a crisis of demand; there will be more students seeking admission to university, and more of them will have been underprepared in the inferior black secondary system.

University Education

University education is offered at 21 institutions including a very large correspondence university. These institutions were originally developed to conform to the racial classification in the country—universities for whites, one for "Coloureds," one for "Asians," and universities for specific African tribal groups in the homelands. Current university enrollment at South African Universities totals 185,000

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*For purposes of this paper, and consistent with the current verbiage in South Africa, the term *black* South African refers to all racial groups (Asian, Coloured, and African) other than white.

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Student Enrollment in South African Universities

(Residential and Commuter)

	English-language Universities		Afrikaans-language Universities		Ethnic Universities		All Universities		Percentage of Total	
	1980	1983	1980	1983	1980	1983	1980	1983	1980	1983
White	31,479	35,159	51,256	53,180	151	369	82,886	88,708	80.7	71.4
Coloured	1,247	1,642	129	342	4,005	4,567	5,381	6,551	5.2	5.2
Asian	1,858	2,675	47	61	4,908	5,588	6,813	8,324	6.6	6.7
African	734	1,547	54	140	6,954	18,994	7,742	20,681	7.5	16.6

Data derived from South African Institute of Race Relations' annual *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa,* 1980 and 1983 editions.

students; one third are enrolled at the correspondence university. Only 31% of university students are black.

The white universities are further divided between those of English and Afrikaans heritage. However, in their earliest years, the four English medium universities insisted on their freedom to admit students without regard to race. The University of the Western Cape, established in 1960, has joined the English medium universities in opening access to all students. These five universities are often referred to as the "Open Universities" and have been instrumental in petitioning the government for the elimination of racially restricting legislation.

Today, the government has finally eliminated the need for a permit for a student to attend other than his "own" university. This means that universities in South Africa today are free to admit students on academic merit alone.

All universities in South Africa are funded in large measure by a state subsidy—between 75% and 90%. This subsidy is determined by a complex formula that considers full time equivalent students and faculty research activities, among other factors. The remainder of the university budget is met by student tuition fees and private grants. This does keep the cost of tuition modest by U.S. terms, but it is in most cases prohibitive for the economically disadvantaged blacks in South Africa.

Combined University Enrollment

(Residential, Commuter, and Correspondence)

	Number of Students		Percentage of Total	
	1980	1983	1980	1983
White	120,290	126,610	75.7	68.9
Coloured	8,203	9,701	5.1	5.3
Asian	12,074	14,216	7.6	7.7
African	18,429	33,361	11.6	18.1

Data derived from South African Institute of Race Relations' annual *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa,* 1980 and 1983 editions.

Those students who complete the requirements for university admission but who come from inferior segregated black schools are often not prepared to do university-level work. Additional preparation in English, mathematics, and study and research skills are often necessary. This additional preparation can be a drain on university resources but is absolutely necessary to assure that students can complete their desired course of study.

Community groups and private organizations are developing special programs in this area which are conducted during the secondary years on vacations and weekends. The South African Committee on Higher Education has initiated a special pre-university introductory year called Khanya College to accomplish this "bridging" function. Further development of these programs will help to alleviate some of the pressures on universities as black enrollments continue to climb.

Other Postsecondary Programs

It is also important to mention other non-university postsecondary programs. These programs are conducted at Technical and Teacher Training Colleges which offer certificate programs in special skills areas, and at "Technikons" which emphasize more practical skills and career-oriented curricula than are available at universities. Increasing numbers of students are preparing for jobs through such programs. As with

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the secondary schooling, education in this area remains totally segregated at "own affairs" institutions.

Within the context of these brief descriptions, we would like to explore areas where U.S. universities can assist those South African organizations working to assure equal access to quality education for all. We will explore three basic areas: financial aid support for students; manpower support to help in tutorials and academic research; and advanced and flexible training opportunities in the U.S.

Financial Aid Support

Each year, hundreds of blacks cannot enroll at universities in South Africa despite their qualifications because they lack even the modest fees required. In the past three years, nearly 150 black students per year were accepted at the University of Cape Town but could not attend because of a lack of scholarship support. Annual tuition fees plus housing, books, and personal expenses cost no more than $3,000 per student. This is a far cry from the $20,000 or more required to bring one student to the U.S., but it is nearly always an impossible burden for black South Africans.

Despite recent scholarship initiatives by the United States and other governments, there is still a growing need for financial aid for individual students. Several U.S. universities have responded with programs to support students in South Africa. The University of Colorado established a South African Scholars Fund by encouraging students to contribute one dollar with their tuition payment at registration. The New England Board of Higher Education encouraged its member institutions to join together in providing scholarship support. To date, 25 institutions in New England have pledged support for 38 scholarships.

Further, we can bring students, particularly at the graduate level, to the U.S. for study. The South African Education Program of the Institute for International Education has expanded its program dramatically in the past several years. It is providing a U.S. educational experience particularly for those who are seeking graduate degrees and a broader world view.

Teaching Support

American students have the potential to assist academic institutions in South Africa. This might best be illustrated by referring to the work of the Academic Support Program at the University of Cape Town.

The Academic Support Program was established in 1980 to assist underprepared black students who have the potential to succeed at the university. The university has finite resources and limited staff, but the appropriate remedial approach seems to be in small group and individual tutorials. Carefully selected U.S. graduate students could provide much needed support in clearly identified areas. (We stress the need for careful selection since we do not need people looking for "Peace Corps" experiences somewhere in Africa. This type of assistance must be provided with due regard for the local initiative and for the socio-political dynamics of the South African educational situation.)

Perhaps the most complex area of exploration but one with high potential is that of providing relevant academic expertise from the U.S. to areas of educational development in South Africa. Providing manpower for academic research must also be conditioned by careful selection and concern for the socio-political dynamics of education in South Africa.

The South African education community is engaged at the moment in assessing areas in which they seek additional expertise. Areas such as adult basic education, literacy training, English as a second language, educational evaluation, and organizations management are identified by many as being key areas for development. Further, curriculum development in math and science education and computer-based instruction are in need of further development.

U.S. academics wishing to pursue these fields should be prepared to work with South Africans to develop country specific projects. While there is much to be learned from the experiences in the United States, there are many profound differences in experience in the two countries. Collaboration will be the key to success.

Students work in the UCT microcomputer laboratory during an intensive two-week pre-university program designed to bridge the gap caused by poor secondary education.

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A further way in which U.S. academics could be particularly helpful would be to go to South Africa for a year and serve as substitute faculty to teach in their own discipline. This would free up certain key South African academics to pursue important projects in various communities where political sensitivities of various local groups requires the work be done by South Africans.

Training Opportunities in the U.S.

The number of organizations where blacks are taking on leadership roles is increasing daily in South Africa. There is a need for training and consultation opportunities for these emerging leaders in many types of organizations—administrative and organizational training for leaders of trade unions, teachers unions, and community groups; and, special opportunities for black university administrators and faculty members to advance their studies in the U.S.

Due to the volatile political situation, many of these leaders are unwilling to take the required time out of the country to complete lengthy degree programs. Also, more specific training and consultation with U.S. counterparts will be of particular value. Development of flexible programs conducted over a three-month to one-year period could give these leaders new perspectives, skills, and contact with their peers that will be helpful in their leadership roles at home.

As programs of this nature develop, several requirements have been identified. First, the specific training experience must be developed in consultation with the South African organization involved in all phases. Second, the program should run over several years, involving a limited number of individuals in each year. Third, it is desirable to consult several appropriate U.S. institutions to broaden the program in this country. Fourth, any program should involve an evaluation component.

How to Get Involved

For institutions wishing to develop initiatives in any of the areas presented, we urge you to begin investigation with American organizations currently involved in these activities.

First, look within your own institution for people who are familiar with the education scene in South Africa. They can often provide an initial orientation to the subject and a direction for further development.

Second, many organizations and individuals in the U.S. have considerable experience in South Africa. We would encourage you to consult with them before setting your own goals. Information seeking trips to South Africa by well-meaning U.S. academics have the potential to overwhelm the administrative structure of South African educational organizations.

The number of organizations and individuals involved is still growing and new links are being formed. We have made an attempt to provide you with a list of some groups and individuals who are involved in each of the areas discussed (see page 19). They will be able to provide information about developing programs in this country and organizations and individuals in South Africa who will be interested in your approaches.

Finally, having consulted available American resources, you should consult with black South Africans involved in the areas you are considering. If you do decide to introduce a program, there are two further elements to consider.

First, examine available resources for your program on your own campus and from groups who support you. Financial resources within South Africa are severely limited and already overcommitted. Universities in the country have experienced cuts of 10-20% in their operating budgets over the last two years. Private educational initiatives are also experiencing financial strains as their programs expand and sources of private support decrease in the recessionary economic climate. The best thought out and developed program will not have any impact without resource commitment.

Second, think through the nature of the commitment and be prepared to be involved for a number of years. The educational organizations in South Africa struggling for change need long-term supportive relationships and not a quick fix response to pressures on your own campus.

In the past several months there has been a marked increase in conversations between U.S. and South African educators both here and in South Africa concerning what types of support are appropriate. As with all things in South Africa, there is no easy answer, but there is a general sense that there is something we as Americans can do and that our offers of assistance are deeply appreciated by our counterparts in that country.

Programs developed after careful study and consultation and following some of the caveats set out above are most likely to provide U.S. institutions with a rewarding involvement with those at the forefront of the struggle in South Africa while assuring those individuals the support and encouragement to continue that struggle for a just and free South Africa.■